

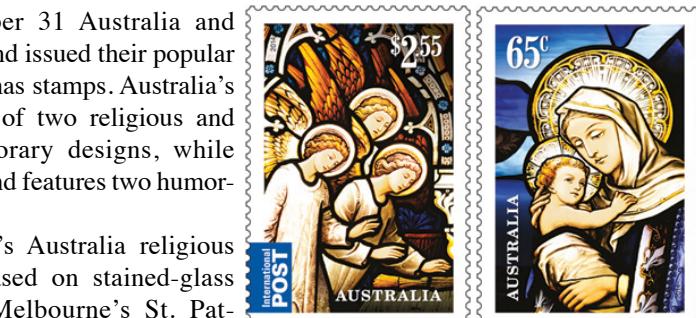
Deck the Halls...with Christmas Stamps

On October 31 Australia and Christmas Island issued their popular annual Christmas stamps. Australia's issue consists of two religious and four contemporary designs, while Christmas Island features two humorous stamps.

This year's Australia religious stamps are based on stained-glass windows in Melbourne's St. Patrick's Cathedral, which is both the tallest and the largest church building in Australia and one of the world's largest Gothic revival 19th century churches —

comparable in size to St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York. The stamps depict two of the church's many beautiful stained glass windows, showing the Nativity of Christ and the Flight into Egypt.

As an alternative to the religious theme, Australia's contemporary stamps present familiar trappings and



sentiments of Christmas and recall techniques of paper cut design as well as snow crystals.

The stamps of Christmas Island are issued under the auspices of Australia Post. Captain William Mynors of the East India Company vessel the *Royal Mary* named Christmas Island when he sailed past it on Christmas Day in 1643. The Christmas Is-

land holiday season stamps traditionally bear a light-hearted theme and this year is no different, as crabs dressed in Santa hats join Father Christmas in preparing for the big day.

The Australia and Christmas Island Christmas stamps and associated products are available at www.auspost.com.au/stamps or contact Australia Stamp Agency in North America toll free (USA and Canada) on 1-800-443-4225 while stocks last.